

Breakaway Ally: How Reagan's 1982 Peace Was Drowned In Blood

by Michele Steinberg

On Oct. 12, 2001, when Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's spokesmen attacked President George W. Bush for speaking of a "vision" of a Palestinian state, they were implicitly warning that the radical forces in Israel's military will massacre civilians by the hundreds, if that's what it takes to stop a U.S. peace initiative.

However implicit the threat, that is exactly what Sharon Cabinet Minister Dan Nevaah meant when he said that Israel will not accept "ideas which include at their core the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. . . . *All history shows that when the Americans put a plan on the table, like the famous Reagan plan, the programs did not achieve their aims*" (emphasis added). The same day, Raanan Gissin, Sharon's spokesman and ardent defender of the "preventive assassination" program, added: "Jerusalem will remain the capital of the Jewish people. . . . The United States will never submit to Israel, by surprise, a plan for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The United States has never imposed a plan that both sides have not accepted." Sharon has demanded to clear any U.S. plans in advance.

A retired U.S. diplomat confirmed to *EIR* that there was a Ronald Reagan peace plan issued in September 1982, which had been worked out primarily in discussions between the Reagan Administration and Arab leaders, including Jordan's King Hussein. On Sept. 1, 1982, in a national address, President Reagan presented the plan to the American public without having allowed the Israelis to "censor" what they didn't like.

According to Washington sources, because Reagan violated this "rule," the plan was "Dead on Arrival," with Gen. Ariel Sharon's massacre of 800 Palestinian civilian men, women, and children at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps

in Lebanon weeks afterward—Sept. 18, 1982. According to another high-level U.S. source, who has spent two decades working on a Middle East peace initiative, it was the bombing of the U.S. Marines barracks in Beirut in October 1983, in which over 200 Marines were killed, that was the "final nail in the coffin" for the Reagan peace initiative. By March 30, 1984, under intense Congressional pressure, Reagan pulled the United States out of the UN multinational force that he had helped create.

Without these specific war and terrorist actions, said this source, a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians could well have been finalized a decade ago.

This story—the 1982 "breakaway ally scenario"—should be a bitter reminder to Washington officials and others, that the right-wing pro-Likud party faction in Washington, especially among the "Wolfowitz cabal" (named for Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz) lie when they try to link Ariel Sharon to the "Reagan tradition," to manipulate President Bush and Republicans.

The LaRouche Factor

The bloody attacks on the Reagan peace plan are a chilling parallel with today's events, a parallel which has been uniquely identified by Lyndon LaRouche, the 2004 Democratic Presidential pre-candidate. Specifically, the Oct. 17, 2001 assassination of Israeli Minister of Tourism Rehavam Ze'evi, and the June 1982 attempt on the life of Israeli Ambassador to London Shlomo Argov, served as identical ruses, used by right-wing forces in the Israeli military to stop any peace initiative.

On June 8, 1982, LaRouche—who had been a 1980 Democratic Presidential contender—announced that "Israeli and



Many remember the destruction of Beirut and massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila camps there; both results of then-Defense Minister Ariel Sharon's Israeli invasion of June 1982. Few remember that it was President Ronald Reagan's Mideast peace initiative, that Sharon was out to kill with this Israeli "breakaway ally" atrocity.

other sources" had provided corroborated intelligence to him indicating that "British intelligence services orchestrated the Abu Nidal gang's assassination attack" against Argov. LaRouche noted that Argov's "security screen" was dropped in London "precisely at the time the attack was deployed," and that the British government had "stripped" Argov of his security forces prior to the attack. LaRouche exposed that then-Defense Minister Ariel Sharon — who promptly used the attack on Argov to invade Lebanon — had "secret agreements" with controllers of the Abu Nidal organization to facilitate Israel's occupying Lebanon. Most importantly, LaRouche revealed that "Prime Minister Menachem Begin had been attempting to prevent an Israeli military invasion of Lebanon" under agreements with Reagan, while "Sharon and U.S. Secretary of State [Alexander] Haig, London and Paris have been conniving behind the backs" of Reagan and Begin to get their invasion.

To stop the impending disaster that began with Sharon's green light to invade Lebanon on June 8, 1982, LaRouche said that Reagan, then on a "useless protracted junket" arranged by Haig, "must come home immediately, fire Haig, [Defense Secretary] Weinberger, [Fed Chairman Paul] Volcker, and a few others, and for the first time since he became President, actually begin to take charge of the situation." In fact, Haig was ousted as Secretary of State in short order, due to a combination of his secret deal with Sharon over invading Lebanon, and his collusion with British Foreign Secretary Lord Peter

Carrington's preparations, in early 1982, for the British war with Argentina over the Malvinas.

But the bloodletting in Lebanon was fully under way, and would get even worse, as Reagan failed to unconditionally defeat Sharon's "breakaway ally scenario" in Lebanon, or its authors in London and Washington.

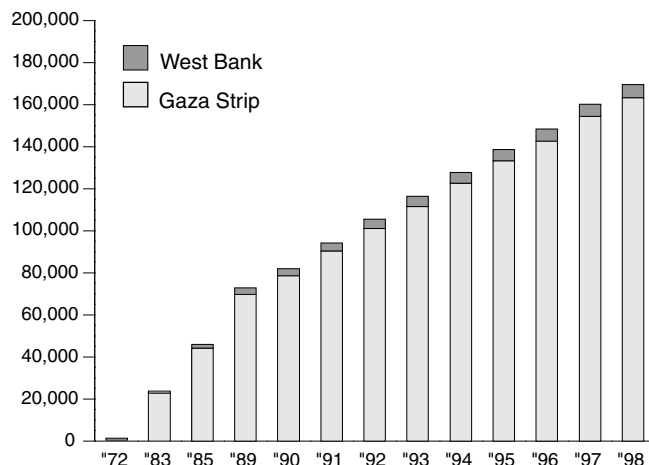
Precursor To A Palestinian State

But on Sept. 1, 1982, despite the months of bloody battles in Lebanon after the Israeli invasion, and despite the attempt by the Israelis and the Lebanese Phalangist militias to wipe out the Palestine Liberation Organization, headed by Yasser Arafat, Reagan deployed U.S. Marines to protect the PLO fighters evacuating Lebanon for Tunisia. It was not the finest strategy, but it was clear that Reagan intended that the place for Palestinians to be was not Lebanon, Jordan, or some other country — but Palestine; and he had been vigorously discussing this option with leaders in the Middle East and Washington.

In Reagan's Sept. 1, 1982 national address, he said, quoting Scripture, that it was "time to follow after the things which make for peace," and laid out an "initiative for a far-reaching peace effort." "The war in Lebanon," said the President, "has demonstrated many things, but two consequences are key to the peace process. First, the military losses of the PLO have not diminished the yearning of the Palestinian people for a just solution of their claims; and second, while Israel's military

FIGURE 1

Settler Population In The West Bank And Gaza Strip, 1972-98



As long ago as 1982, President Ronald Reagan identified the growth of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories, as a primary obstacle to American peace efforts. Twenty years later, when the Mitchell Commission emphasized the same point, the settlements had grown by almost ten times.

successes in Lebanon have demonstrated that its armed forces are second to none in the region, they alone cannot bring just and lasting peace to Israel and her neighbors.”

Reagan said the evacuation from Lebanon “dramatizes more than ever the homelessness of the Palestinians”; the Palestinians’ “legitimate rights” and “just requirements” must be resolved “at the negotiating table” in the framework of Camp David, where the return of the Sinai to Egypt had just been effected in April 1982, by Begin and Egypt’s President Hosni Mubarak. In his speech, Reagan revealed that it was the Israeli invasion of Lebanon that had stymied taking the Camp David process between Egypt and Israel to his intended next step: Israel and Palestine.

The main points of Reagan’s five-page speech are much in accord with the proposals of the Mitchell Commission of 2001; especially, on the question of Israeli settlements. Reagan specified:

- Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza must have “full autonomy over their own affairs . . . [with] due consideration to the principle of self government”;
- “A five-year period of transition, which would begin after free elections for a self-governing Palestinian authority”: This would prove that “Palestinian autonomy poses no threat to Israel’s security”;
- “The United States will not support the use of any additional land for the purpose of [Israeli] settlements during the

transitional [five-year] period. Indeed, the immediate adoption of a settlement freeze by Israel, more than any other action, could create the confidence needed”;

- “Further settlement activity is in no way necessary for the security of Israel,” but in fact diminishes the confidence needed for negotiations.

The President explicitly said that he was *not* supporting a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, but also that he “will not support annexation or permanent control by Israel” of those territories. Rather, said Reagan, he envisioned “self-government by the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza in association with Jordan,” and the full adherence by Israel to the “withdrawal provision of UN Security Council resolution 242” as it applies to “all fronts, including the West Bank and Gaza.”

He proudly announced that the preparation of this proposal had been accomplished “for once” with “no premature leaks” as U.S. “Ambassadors in Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and Saudia Arabia . . . presented to their host governments the proposals in full detail.” He also called for direct negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis, and said that the “final status” of Jerusalem “should be decided through negotiation.”

The proposal was greeted with enthusiasm by Lebanese leaders, and by the Mayor of Bethlehem, a Palestinian. But, secretly, the Begin government went into fits, special meetings, and sabotage. By Sept. 18, the hoped-for the peace initiative was killed. The White House issued a terse sentence that accompanied an official Presidential statement. “On Sept. 17, hundreds of Palestinian men, women, and children had been murdered in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps south of Beirut,” noted the White House.

President Reagan’s statement was very strong. “I was horrified to learn this morning of the killing of Palestinians which has taken place in Beirut,” he said. “All people of decency must share our outrage and revulsion of the murders, which included women and children. . . . During the negotiations leading to the PLO withdrawal from Beirut, we were assured that Israeli forces would not enter West Beirut. We also understood that following withdrawal, Lebanese Army units would establish control over that city. We were thwarted in this effort by the Israeli occupation that took place beginning on Wednesday [Sept. 14]. We strongly opposed Israel’s move into West Beirut following the assassination of . . . President Bashir Gemayel, both because we believed it wrong in principle, and for fear that it would provoke further fighting. Israel . . . in military control of Beirut, claimed that its moves would prevent the kind of tragedy which has now occurred.”

The United States had “summoned the Israeli Ambassador,” said Reagan, “to demand that the Israeli government immediately withdraw its forces from West Beirut.” He added that Israel must “commence serious negotiations which will, first, lead to the earliest possible disengagement of Israeli forces from Beirut and, second, to an agreed frame-

work for the early withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon.”

In response to the Sabra and Shatila tragedy, Reagan pledged to vigorously pursue his peace initiative of Sept. 1, and to take “full account of the needs of the Palestinian people.” But, the fanatic forces inside the Israeli military and religious right, in parallel with the terrorist counterparts among anti-American Islamic groups, began a series of operations to drive the United States out of Lebanon. Israel did not withdraw from Lebanon until 1999, when Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak ordered the withdrawal in conjunction with attempts to reach an Israeli-Palestinian peace accord.

Pre-Meditated Massacre

To understand the violence of the Sharon government’s response to reports that Bush and U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell had been planning—prior to Sept. 11, 2001—to launch a peace initiative including plans for finalizing a Palestinian state, the reader must look back 20 years to the right-wing Likudniks’ attempts to stop peace accords—at any cost.

During this time, the “breakaway ally” moves have become almost a standard tactic in so-called Israeli “diplomacy.” Two of the most notorious Israeli war crimes fit this category: the November 1981 bombing of the Osirak nuclear energy facility in Iraq; and the June 1982 invasion of Lebanon, ordered by Sharon after the assassination attempt on Shlomo Argov.

When Prime Minister Begin ordered the Israeli air strikes on the Iraqi nuclear power plant, in November 1981, it was only weeks after the Oct. 6 assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. With Sadat’s Egypt having been the first Arab country since the 1967 war to reach a peace agreement with Israel, his murder by Muslim extremists, could have finished off any hopes for a peace process. As Arab leaders, especially incoming Egyptian President Mubarak, struggled to prevent the outbreak of new wars with Israel, Begin went forward with the attack on Iraq, thereby inflaming the Arab world against Israel—and against the United States, which had pledged to uphold Israeli “security.” The Reagan Administration took extraordinary care to rescue the Egypt-Israel accord by ensuring that the Israeli-occupied Sinai would be returned to Egypt on schedule, *despite* the killing of Sadat.

But U.S. equivocation after the unprovoked Israeli attack on Iraq, was a signal to the forces led by General Sharon that they could, literally, “get away with murder.” Prime Minister Begin had resisted the pressure to bring in Ariel Sharon, already an accused war criminal for his attacks on defenseless Palestinians, as Defense Minister. By Spring 1982, Sharon had won the appointment, and began his Lebanon scheme.

According to Ze’ev Schiff, in his book, *The War In Lebanon*, Sharon operated a virtual “government within a government” from the Defense Ministry, through his networks in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). Schiff, who is now the military

correspondent for the Israeli newspaper *Ha’aretz*, reported that Sharon’s inner circle had detailed, multi-layered war plans for taking over Lebanon. Sharon had figured, wrote Schiff, that until all the Muslims were removed from political power in the Lebanese Parliament, and replaced with the Christians in the Phalange, Israel would never be safe.

After months of secret meetings by Sharon and his IDF loyalists with the various warlord leaders of the Phalange militias, Sharon fashioned a military deal. The Christians would fight the Palestinians and Syrians in Beirut, when Israel invaded Lebanon. However, in Spring 1982, Sharon’s plan received a serious setback when his Washington contact, Secretary of State Haig, who had written a letter giving a green light to Sharon’s Lebanon scheme, was overruled by the White House.

In fact, instead of a Washington okay for invading Lebanon, there were talks between Begin and Reagan to pursue a peace strategy. But, on June 4, 1982, with the shooting of Argov, any “restraints” from Washington evaporated. Though the alleged perpetrator, Abu Nidal, was an enemy of Arafat and the PLO, and though there was ample evidence of Israeli and British intelligence involvement in the shooting, Argov’s bloody shirt became the pretext for the deep invasion and permanent occupation of Lebanon.

On June 17, 2001, British Broadcasting Corporation’s television show “Panorama,” reopened the issue of the Lebanon war, and particularly the Sabra and Shatila massacres, pointing the finger at current Prime Minister Sharon in a broadcast entitled “The Accused.” Witnesses from the United States, Israel, and Lebanon made clear that Sharon knew that the Phalange militia were going to conduct “revenge” murders of civilians—the Israelis had told the Americans as much one day before the massacre. Morris Draper, the U.S. envoy to Lebanon, told BBC’s reporter Fergal Keane, that there was more at play than just Sharon’s brutality.

Draper told BBC, “America said that the women and children and others left behind [when the PLO evacuated] would be able to live in peace, as long as they obeyed the law and Lebanese jurisdiction. It was as simple as that—a very simple document. I wrote it.” Israel signed it, and then violated the promise to President Reagan.

President Bush should be armed with the real history of Reagan’s peace effort—not with the lies from the Sharon gang in Israel, and the treasonous Wolfowitz cabal in Washington.

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